



## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS**

**The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of  
Homeland Security and Emergency Management**  
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Winter returns. This is a plow's-eye view of a snowy road in the Enfield area. Photo courtesy of N.H. Department of Transportation.

**STATE WEATHERS FIRST STORMS OF THE SEASON** – The Atlantic hurricane season ended November 30<sup>th</sup> with no significant storms striking New England, but winter was right behind it with the season's first snowstorm. The National Weather Service posted winter storm warnings for all 10 counties and the system, which came howling out of the Rockies and Plains states, pretty much lived up to its advance billing. The storm dumped more than a foot of snow in the northern mountains and forced nearly 600 schools, daycares and other institutions to close. But no serious accidents and no power outages were reported. It was a good start for the winter ski and snowmobile seasons. Three more major snowstorms followed. Spring is a long way off.

**ABOVE-AVERAGE 2008 HURRICANE SEASON PREDICTED** – Speaking of hurricanes, the hurricane forecasting team at Colorado State University is predicting an above-average Atlantic hurricane season for 2008. The CSU team is predicting 13 named storms, seven hurricanes and three intense hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5) for the Atlantic Coast, including all of Florida. That compares with averages of 9.6 named storms, 5.9 hurricanes and 2.3 intense hurricanes for the period 1950-2000. The researchers said they believe that the Atlantic basin is in an active cycle that will continue for at least another decade, despite the relatively inactive 2006 and 2007 seasons. This was the 25<sup>th</sup> annual hurricane forecast for the Colorado State team. They will issue an updated forecast for 2008 in April.

**STUDY SHOWS INCREASE IN SEVERE STORMS** – The floods that struck New Hampshire between October 2005 and April of this year may be the norm rather than the exception, according to a study by an environmental group. The study, titled *When It Rains, It Pours: Global Warming and the Rising Frequency of Extreme Precipitation in the United States*, found that in New England, storms with heavy rainfall or snowfall are 61 percent more likely than 60 years ago. For New Hampshire, such storms are 83 percent more likely. The study blames the increase on global warming. It is based on climate data from 3,000 weather stations across the continental United States covering the period 1948-2006.

The study was conducted by Environment New Hampshire. It was released at a December 4<sup>th</sup> news conference in Portsmouth. The group's full report is available at [www.environmentnewhampshire.org](http://www.environmentnewhampshire.org).

**FLOOD STUDY BEING DONE ON SOUTHERN N.H. RIVERS** – An independent evaluation is being conducted of flooding along rivers in southern New Hampshire. It is an effort to determine the specific causes of the recent floods and to make recommendations for improvements to water management and dam operations to reduce the effects of future floods. The study, which is being conducted by the engineering firm URS Corporation under contract to FEMA, will cost \$300,000 and is scheduled to be completed by next May. It will determine the causes of flooding in the Piscataquag, Souhegan, Soucook, Suncook, Contoocook, Cocheco, Lamprey, Oyster, Salmon Falls and Isinglass river basins. The study will also examine the effects of dam operations on flooding in the Salmon Falls, Souhegan, Piscataquag and Suncook basins.

A public meeting was held at the Department of Environmental Services on December 12<sup>th</sup> to outline the scope of the study. About 100 people turned out. Additional public meetings will be held in March, April and May to discuss the findings of the study.

**WEBSITE PROVIDES INFORMATION ON ANIMALS IN DISASTER** – N.H. Disaster Animal Response Team has a website up, providing information on the group's activities, disaster planning and training. N.H. DART was organized in May to assist State Veterinarian Dr. Steve Crawford plan for taking care of house pets and farm animals during disasters.

The group is organized as a non-profit corporation and is working to develop a number of response teams. It is also seeking volunteers and financial contributions. Check out the website at <http://newhampshiredart.org/home.html>.

**HSEM AND PARTNERS PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES** – Two major exercises were held during December involving nearly all HSEM staff and many partner agencies. A regional pandemic flu exercise was held on December 12<sup>th</sup> involving all six FEMA Region I states. On December 19<sup>th</sup> the state EOC was fully activated for a winter storm exercise. In addition to activities in Concord, the towns of Bartlett, Campton, Jackson and Thornton participated. Amateur radio operators provided back-up communications with the towns.

**FIRST RESPONDERS MEET WITH LEGISLATORS** – First responders from Acworth, Auburn, Goffstown, Hudson, Langdon and Merrimack met December 14<sup>th</sup> with members of the legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee to discuss emergency management concerns in smaller communities. The meeting, which was held at the State Operations and Communications Center, was led by the committee's chairman, Rep. Mary J. Gorman, D-Nashua. The local responders expressed concerns about training requirements for volunteer fire and emergency medical personnel and communications interoperability, among other issues.

**PARENTS HAVE A MAJOR ROLE IN SCHOOL EMERGENCIES** - More than 95 percent of the schools in New Hampshire have participated in HSEM's Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning for Schools program. Years before the shootings at Columbine High School, New Hampshire's schools had begun their planning efforts. Many are now some of the best prepared schools in the country. But having a team-built and well-practiced school plan is only part of a school's overall preparedness. Parents should know what's expected of them during a school emergency. Here are a few suggestions:

**Don't call the school!** By clogging the school's phone system you may prevent them from receiving or delivering critical information.

**Don't call your child's cell phone!** Information is best sorted out by adults; a child probably does not have accurate information. Also, cell phones can detonate some explosive devices.

**Don't go to the school!** Parents "self-responding" can cause severe traffic tie-ups preventing fire, police and emergency medical personnel from reaching the school.

**Listen to the news media and stay by a phone!** The school will notify you when it's safe and where to pick up your child or children.

Knowing what is expected of us is one of the most important parts of any emergency plan. By following these few suggestions all of us can work together in keeping our children safe no matter what the emergency situation.

*Happy Holidays from N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management*